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ABSTRACT

Stating the beliefs, principles, goals, and dimensions of the Early Childhood Services (ECS) program, this document provides basic direction for parents, program staff, and community services in developing, implementing, and evaluating programs responsive to the developmental and special needs of young children and their families. ECS is a coordinated delivery system of local, regional, and provincial programs especially focusing on preschool children and their families, and including government departments responsible for health, social, educational, and recreational services. Intended for use by parents, staff, and community service workers, most of the material in this document centers on ECS program dimensions. Based on the philosophy and goals described in sections 1 and 2, the following dimensions are identified: physical development, (including health and physical skills), social development, emotional development, self-concept, intellectual and creative development, parent involvement, staff development, and community services. The dimensions are expanded in terms of objectives for parents, staff, community services, and young children. The basic components of ECS programs, as well as guidelines for the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs and the identification of staff development needs, are discussed in terms of these identified program dimensions. (RH)

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Early Childhood Services

Philosophy, Goals and
Program Dimensions
Interim Edition 1982

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Philosophy, Goals and Program Dimensions

Acknowledgements

The philosophy and goals in this book originate from Operational Plans for Early Childhood Services. This document is a more specific statement of the philosophy and goals for Early Childhood Services, first adopted by the Government of Alberta in 1973. It will serve as an interim edition until the Fall of 1983. Your comments and suggestions for improving the document are invited.

The Early Childhood Services (ECS) Branch, Alberta Education, acknowledges the contribution of Mrs. Myra Baynton who was responsible for researching and compiling this statement with direction and assistance from ECS Branch staff and with the advice and assistance of many individuals, especially personnel belonging to the Parent Resource Unit, Alberta Social Services and Community Health. This document is expected to provide a basis for parents, staff and community services to plan, implement and evaluate programs for young children and their families.

August 10, 1982

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION.....	i
I. PHILOSOPHY.....	
A. Beliefs.....	1
B. Principles.....	3
II. GOALS.....	9
III. PROGRAM DIMENSIONS.....	11
Introduction.....	11
1. Health and Physical Development.....	13
2. Social Development.....	17
3. Emotional Development.....	19
4. Self-Concept Development.....	21
5. Intellectual Development.....	23
6. Creative Development.....	26
7. Parent Involvement.....	29
8. Staff Development and Community Services.....	31
BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR SECTION 1B.....	33

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Services (ECS) is a coordinated delivery system of local, regional and provincial programs concerned with the developmental and special needs* of young children and their families with particular emphasis on the preschool years.+ Included in the system are government departments who have responsibility for health, social, educational and recreational services for children and their families.

This document describes the philosophy, the goals, and the program dimensions of Early Childhood Services. It is divided into three major sections:

SECTION I: ECS Philosophy:

This section presents the beliefs and describes the knowledge, both theory and research, on which ECS is based.

SECTION II: ECS Goals:

This section states the goals of ECS. These are broad statements that reflect the direction, scope and anticipated outcomes of the program. These goals are related to the child, the family, the staff and the community.

* Developmental needs are the physical, emotional, social, intellectual and creative needs of all young children. Special needs refer to those areas where a particular developmental problem exists.

+ The Alberta School Grants Regulations should be consulted to determine children who are eligible for grant support.

SECTION III: ECS Program Dimensions: This section outlines how the goals are to be reflected in the programs.

By describing the philosophy, goals and program dimensions of Early Childhood Services, this document specifies what ECS is attempting to accomplish with the child, the child's family and the community. This document is to be used by parents, staff and community services as a guideline for the development, implementation and evaluation of local, regional, and provincial programs, and for the identification of staff development needs. The philosophy, goals and program dimensions apply to all ECS programs including those with a special focus, such as immersion or bilingual programs.

SECTION I
EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES PHILOSOPHY

A. BELIEFS

The beliefs inherent in the Early Childhood Services system include:

1. The Child

- * Each child is unique and should have the opportunity to develop his⁺ abilities.
- * Both parents and society should provide opportunities for each child to develop his abilities.
- * The dignity and worth of each child must be respected and enhanced.
- * At any given time, each child is developing physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially and creatively. All these areas are related to and dependent on one another and are of equal importance in the child's development.
- * The child, whose needs have been met adequately, is more likely to develop into a healthy, responsible and secure person.
- * The child has a natural curiosity that results in an eagerness to learn. Providing opportunities that stimulate this curiosity is important.
- * Play is central to children's learning.

⁺ In this document, "his" is used to denote both his and her.

- * The handicapped child is a person first and a handicapped child second.
- * The prevention of problems is preferable to remedial treatment.

2. The Family

- * The dignity and worth of the family must be respected and enhanced.
- * The family, in its various forms, is a fundamental and an important unit in society. Its function in meeting the developmental and special needs of children must be recognized and supported.
- * Effective programs require the commitment of parents and other individuals.
- * Parents have the right and the responsibility to be involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of programs for their children and themselves.

3. Staff

- * Effective programs require the commitment of staff who possess the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to meet the needs of children and their parents.
- * Staff with different backgrounds of training may be required to meet the various needs of young children and parents.

4. The Community

- * Because individuals, families and communities are unique culturally, economically and geographically, programs should be flexible and responsive to needs.

- * Decisions to operate and/or enrol children who are younger than the compulsory school age in programs should be voluntary rather than compulsory.
- * Children with handicaps and those living in designated disadvantaged areas should receive priority.
- * Community resource persons can assist in meeting developmental and special needs of children and families.
- * A comprehensive, coordinated, team approach to the delivery of services is required in order to meet the needs of children, parents, staff and community.

B. PRINCIPLES

Early Childhood Services is based on the following principles:

1. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IS A CONTINUOUS, SEQUENTIAL, INTERACTIVE PROCESS

Human development is a continuous process starting with simple skills which are gradually and continuously built upon and incorporated into more complex skills. For example, a child walks before he runs, babbles before he talks and plays alone before he plays with others.

Each child has his own rate of development and each child, at any given time, is developing physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially and creatively. He is an active, feeling, thinking, creative person who associates with others. All these areas of development are related to and dependent on one another as the child interacts with his environment, both physical (materials) and social (people). Not only is the child influenced by his surroundings but he, in turn, influences his environment by affecting the behavior of others toward him.

Development in one area directly or indirectly affects development in all other areas. For example, the adequacy of a child's diet (pre and post-natal) can affect how he grows, how he feels and how he learns.

A child's physical characteristics can affect his personality, how he feels about himself, his attitudes, emotions and relationships with others. The development of language can aid the child's thinking. Anxiety and stress can interfere with the child's ability to solve problems and to get along with others.

Each child needs attention, acceptance and love. He also needs to experience and express feelings, be physically healthy and active, develop language skills and thinking processes, develop relationships with others and express himself in unique and individual ways. Each child needs to develop a responsible attitude toward other children and society. The meeting of these needs, in an integrated manner, contributes to the total development of the child.

2. EARLY CHILDHOOD IS A PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT PERIOD IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

There is much evidence to suggest that the quality of a child's early experiences (including pre-natal) affects his health and physical development, his ability to learn and his personality.

The child is thought to be very susceptible and responsive to influences in the environment during the early years. Independence, initiative, decision-making, creativity, ability to learn, ability to relate to others and feelings of self-worth all have their beginnings in early childhood. Therefore, the child must receive stimulation and security in order to have his developmental needs met adequately.

3. THE SELF-CONCEPT IS IMPORTANT IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The self-concept is the image an individual has of himself and includes knowledge and feelings about who he is, what he is like and what

he can do. During the early years the child's self-concept is developing and is influenced by the way he is treated by significant people in his environment - family, peers and teachers. Through his understanding of how others see him, the child learns to value himself and decides whether he is worthwhile and competent.

High self-esteem results from a positive self-concept and the acceptance of oneself as a worthwhile person. The child's self-concept influences his behavior. Usually, the child with high self-esteem tends to try new experiences, to acquire a greater variety of skills and to relate to people more easily than the child who feels inadequate. If children are to develop images of themselves as truly adequate people, they need experiences that nurture and contribute to their feelings of adequacy and worth.

4. CHILDREN LEARN THROUGH INTERACTION WITH THEIR ENVIRONMENT

Young children are naturally curious. They learn through exploring and experimenting with their environments. They also learn by imitating the behavior of other people and by receiving reinforcement in the form of affection and approval. The child's view of the world differs from that of adults. Children need time to come to know and develop their own understanding of their surroundings. Young children think in very concrete terms, noticing the immediately observable characteristics of objects and people, such as shape or color. They are still laying a foundation for abstract and logical thinking. Therefore, children need concrete, first-hand experiences before they are able to understand abstract concepts. For example, playing with containers of various sizes and shapes can help children develop concepts such as relative weight and size at a level they can understand. Later, they will be able to understand more complex abstractions such as density and volume.

As the child learns something new, the information is added to his previous knowledge or it changes his understanding of prior learnings. Young children learn best through experiencing a variety of enriching, stimulating situations that involve all the senses: touch, sight, hearing,

smell, taste and body movement. The more diverse the child's experiences, the greater the foundation for the formation of ideas, the development of language, the solution of problems and the expression of thoughts and feelings.

Creative thinking is the ability to generate more than one answer to a question or solution to a problem, to use everyday materials in novel or unusual ways, and to use one's imagination in play. The child's own discovery of knowledge can be encouraged by asking "What if", questions that suggest many possible answers, by enabling him to try out his own ideas and by providing materials and activities that stretch his imagination.

In summary, young children need concrete, first-hand experience with a variety of materials and people in order to build a solid foundation for later abstract learning. They need experiences that lead to the development of logical thinking, reading, writing and mathematical skills. They also need experiences that encourage creative thinking, stimulate the imagination and develop non-verbal ways of understanding and expressing ideas. Children need to be encouraged to express their ideas in a variety of ways, whether through art, movement, music, drama or language.

5. PLAY IS CENTRAL TO THE CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

Play is a central and necessary part of the child's development. It is an activity a child has freely chosen, is under his control and is not dominated or imposed by an adult. Play is a major avenue for learning and, with its risk-free atmosphere, provides a natural opportunity for young children to add to their knowledge, learn new skills and to practise familiar ones. It provides many situations in which the child observes, discovers, reasons and solves problems. Play brings together physical and intellectual abilities, emotional health, creativity and the ability to get along with others.

Parents, early childhood staff and communities must provide the materials, time and space so that play is an integral part of every child's

day. They can carefully plan and provide opportunities that capitalize on the natural tendency to play. For example, playing with water or sand can, if the appropriate materials are made available, provide the child with the experience of feeling different textures and hearing different sounds, helping him understand concepts such as weight, size, shape, roughness or smoothness. If provided with such opportunities and allowed choices as to how he wishes to use the materials, the child will select activities that reflect his needs, interests and developmental level.

6. PARENTS ARE PRIMARY AGENTS IN THE CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

The first and most significant environment of the child is provided by his immediate family. There is increasing evidence that individuals learn from the first days of life. Since the parents or their equivalents control and structure the environment, they become the child's first teachers. Parents, through their daily contact with the child, help him develop ideas, language, and an understanding of the world and his place in it. They are intimately involved in meeting the child's basic physical needs including adequate nutrition and health. Similarly, they meet the child's need for love, security and relationships with others, and provide stimulating activities that allow the child to express himself creatively. Many things influence the parents' ability to meet the needs of their children. For example, the adequacy of the mother's diet influences her energy level and thus her ability to effectively stimulate her child, and knowledge of child development assists the mother to provide appropriate mental stimulation.

Social and technological change, economic conditions and geographic mobility have resulted in changes in the structure and function of the family. To be better prepared to meet these changing conditions, parents need the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills in working with young children.

7. THERE IS NEED FOR COORDINATED, RESPONSIVE SERVICES

There are many agencies concerned with providing services to young children and their families. Parents and staff need to know what services are available and how to obtain them. A system of cooperation, at the local and regional levels, is required in order to deliver programs that meet the needs of children, parents and staff.

The coordination of services is often suggested as one means to achieve a more comprehensive, responsive and less fragmented system of services. Coordination may be achieved through communication and cooperation among services with respect to personnel, facilities and funds. Through coordinating services, separately administered health, educational, recreational and social programs should operate as a network of services that collectively meet the needs of children, parents and staff.

SECTION II
EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES GOALS

The goals of Early Childhood Services are based on the beliefs and principles described in Section I. They provide the direction, scope and anticipated outcomes of the program for children, parents, staff and community services. The goals are as follows:

1. To enhance the physical development of young children. This includes the provision of adequate health care, particularly nutrition and dental care, and the development of gross motor, fine motor and perceptual motor skills.
2. To enhance the emotional and social development of young children. This includes the experience and expression of feelings, the demonstration of independence and the development of positive relationships with others.
3. To contribute to the development of a positive self-concept in young children. This includes the knowledge, acceptance and appreciation of oneself as an individual and an acceptance and appreciation of others as individuals.
4. To enhance the intellectual development of young children. This includes the development of thinking processes and the acquisition and use of language.
5. To enhance the creative development of young children. This involves the use of past experience to develop new ideas, novel approaches or original products and includes the expression of self through creative thought, language, music, movement, drama and art.

6. To contribute to the involvement of parents. Involvement includes taking part in the development, implementation and evaluation of ECS programs.
7. To enhance the knowledge and skills required by staff to develop, implement and evaluate the ECS program.
8. To contribute to a comprehensive, coordinated system of early childhood services which includes:
 - a. providing opportunities for individuals, families and communities to identify needs as they relate to young children and to work cooperatively toward meeting these needs.
 - b. identifying gaps in services for young children and their families.
 - c. using existing services for young children and their families.
 - d. developing and providing required services.
 - e. planning and implementing a coordinated delivery of services.

SECTION III

PROGRAM DIMENSIONS

INTRODUCTION

This section describes the program dimensions of Early Childhood Services. Based on the philosophy and goals described in Sections I and II, the dimensions are: physical development, including health and physical skills; social development; emotional development; self-concept; intellectual and creative development; parent involvement; staff development and community services. The dimensions are divided into objectives for parents, staff, community services and young children. The objectives identify the basic components of ECS programs and provide general guidelines for the development, implementation and evaluation of programs, while allowing for flexibility in meeting the unique needs of local programs. This section provides a basis from which a variety of appropriate methods for meeting the needs of children and their families may be developed and applied.

Dimensions 1 to 5, which correspond to the areas of child development, have been separated for clarity and emphasis only and are not mutually exclusive categories. For example, creative expression is an intellectual process i.e., forming ideas, as well as an emotional experience i.e., expressing feelings. Similarly, the child's self-concept influences, and is influenced by how he performs physically, socially and intellectually. In attempting to achieve the goals of Early Childhood Services, only those methods that recognize and contribute to the interrelatedness and interdependence of the child's development should be considered.

The emphasis in this section is on the developmental needs common to all young children. However, some children and their families experience difficulty in particular areas of development. A "special needs" category has been included to encompass these.

Responsibility for Program Dimensions

Early Childhood Services is a system of local, regional and provincial programs. While the family has the most significant role, the responsibility for meeting the developmental and special needs of children is often shared by local programs, regional coordinating committees, government departments and service agencies.

The dimensions described on the following pages apply to parents and staff involved in local ECS programs as well as to community services (including government departments) that share, with local programs, responsibility for meeting the health, social, educational and recreational needs of young children and their families.

Parents, staff and community services are expected to apply the following dimensions in a manner appropriate to the particular needs and the developmental level of each child.

1. HEALTH AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

HEALTH

To ensure the adequate health of young children, it is important for parents, staff and community services to:

- 1.1 recognize the need for adequate physical and dental health in young children.
 - 1.2 provide an environment that obtains and maintains adequate physical and dental health in young children which includes:
 - a. providing an environment free of known factors that cause accidents.
 - b. providing an environment free of known factors that cause illness.
 - 1.3 use children's health needs (physical and dental) as a basis for program planning.
 - 1.4 acquire knowledge and understanding of good nutrition which will encourage:
 - a. providing nutritious food.
 - b. planning activities and providing information about nutrition.
 - c. assessing attitudes regarding nutrition and developing strategies for change if required.
-

SPECIAL NEEDS

Some young children have special health needs. Programs should:

- 1.5 identify and assess health problems in young children.
- 1.6 assist young children who have health problems.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

To ensure normal physical development of young children, it is important for parents, staff and community services to:

- 1.7 acquire knowledge and understanding of the physical development of young children which includes:
 - a. assessing what the child is able to do physically.
 - b. recognizing and accepting individual differences in physical development.
- 1.8 use children's physical needs as a basis for program planning.
- 1.9 plan activities and provide materials that contribute to the development of physical skills in young children.

To enhance the physical development of young children, programs should provide the opportunity for young children to:

- 1.10 develop gross motor skills. These skills involve large muscle activity and are present in movements such as crawling, walking, running, leaping, jumping, hopping, galloping, skipping and climbing.
- 1.11 to develop fine motor skills. These skills involve muscles in the arms, hands and fingers. They include finger speed, arm steadiness, arm and hand precision, finger and hand dexterity and are present in activities that involve the manipulation of small materials.

- 1.12 to develop perceptual motor skills.

These skills involve the ability to combine information received from the sense organs with a motor response. For example, coordinated movement such as catching or kicking involves the use of perceptual motor skills.

The important perceptual motor skills include:

- a. body awareness the ability to discriminate body parts and understand their function.
- b. spatial awarenesses: the awareness of how much space the body occupies and the ability to move the body through space effectively.
- c. directional awareness: the awareness of direction: left-right, up-down, etc.
- d. temporal awareness: the sense of timing fundamental to all coordinated movement.
- e. sensory awareness: seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting.

SPECIAL NEEDS

In addition to the above, some children have special needs related to the physical area of development. To adequately meet these needs programs should:

- 1.13 identify and assess physical and sensory problems in young children.
- 1.14 assist children with physical and sensory handicaps.

2. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

To enhance the social development of young children it is important for parents, staff and community services to:

- 2.1 acquire knowledge and understanding of the social development of young children which includes:
 - a. assessing how the child interacts with others.
 - b. recognizing and accepting individual differences in the social development of children.
- 2.2 recognize and accept each child as an individual, as a member of a family, peer group, community and particular culture.
- 2.3 enhance feelings of mutual respect, acceptance and caring among children and adults.
- 2.4 construct an environment that encourages social interaction among children and adults.
- 2.5 use children's identified social needs as a basis for program planning.
- 2.6 plan activities and provide materials that encourage the social development of young children.

To enhance the social development of young children, programs should provide the opportunity for young children to:

- 2.7 develop positive relationships with others (family, peers, ECS staff and other adults in the community).

- 2.8 cooperate with others.
 - 2.9 share with others.
 - 2.10 cope with interpersonal conflict.
 - 2.11 develop an awareness of the needs of others and an acceptance of individual differences.
 - 2.12 develop an awareness of the community which includes resources such as block parents, hospitals, etc.
 - 2.13 take part as a member of a group which includes:
 - a. giving and following directions
 - b. listening to others
 - c. giving help to and receiving help from peers and adults.
-

SPECIAL NEEDS

Some children have difficulty with interpersonal relationships. Programs should:

- 2.14 identify, assess and assist children who are having difficulty getting along with others.

3. EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

To enhance the emotional development of young children, it is important for parents, staff and community services to:

- 3.1 acquire knowledge and understanding of the emotional needs of young children which includes:
 - a. assessing the emotional needs of the child.
 - b. recognizing and accepting individual differences in emotional development.
- 3.2 provide an environment in which the child is accepted, respected and feels secure.
- 3.3 assist the child in the recognition and appropriate expression of feelings.
- 3.4 use children's emotional needs as a basis for program planning.
- 3.5 plan activities and provide materials that encourage the emotional development of young children.

To enhance the emotional development of young children, programs should provide the opportunity for young children to:

- 3.6 recognize, accept and express their feelings.
- 3.7 cope with failure and frustration.
- 3.8 express anger in appropriate ways.
- 3.9 give and receive affection.

- 3.10 demonstrate appropriate behavior.
 - 3.11 develop independence.
 - 3.12 make decisions.
 - 3.13 develop initiative.
 - 3.14 become involved in self-directed activities.
-

SPECIAL NEEDS

Some children have special needs related to their emotional development. Programs should:

- 3.14 identify and assess emotional problems in young children.
- 3.15 assist young children who have emotional problems.

4. SELF-CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

A child's self-concept is central to all areas of development. The child's perception and feelings about himself influence, and are influenced by, how he performs physically, intellectually, socially and creatively. Therefore, in order to contribute to the development of positive self-concepts in young children, it is important for parents, staff and community services to:

- 4.1 acquire knowledge and understanding of the factors that contribute to the development of a positive self-concept in young children.
- 4.2 accept and value each child as a worthwhile human being which includes respecting the child's family, language and culture.
- 4.3 plan activities which help the child to express how he feels about himself.
- 4.4 recognize individual differences in self-concept and use these as a basis for program planning.
- 4.5 plan activities and provide materials that encourage the development of a positive self-concept.

To enhance the development of a positive self-concept in young children, programs should provide the opportunity for young children to:

- 4.6 acquire knowledge and acceptance of themselves as worthwhile individuals which includes acceptance of their limitations.
- 4.7 acquire knowledge and acceptance of others as worthwhile individuals which includes acceptance of their strengths and limitations.

- 4.8 develop and maintain pride in family, language and cultural heritage.
 - 4.9 develop feelings of self-worth as a result of experiencing competence and success.
-

SPECIAL NEEDS

Some children have very low self-esteem which can affect all aspects of their behavior and performance. Programs should:

- 4.10 identify and assist children who have low self-esteem.

5. INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

To enhance the intellectual development of young children, it is important for parents, staff and community services to:

- 5.1 acquire knowledge and understanding of the intellectual development of young children which includes:
 - a. assessing the intellectual needs of the child;
 - b. recognizing and accepting individual differences in intellectual development.
- 5.2 use children's intellectual needs as a basis for program planning.
- 5.3 provide an environment that encourages self-directed learning.
- 5.4 plan activities and provide materials that encourage the intellectual development of children.

To enhance the intellectual development of young children, programs should provide the opportunity for young children to:

- 5.5 select, plan and organize their own learning activities.
- 5.6 develop positive feelings towards learning.
- 5.7 develop observation skills which includes obtaining information about objects and events through use of the five senses.
- 5.8 acquire knowledge and understanding of the properties of objects and events in the environment which includes:

- (a) classifying objects according to common properties such as color, size, shape and texture.
 - (b) comparing objects according to size, shape, mass, volume and weight.
 - (c) arranging objects or events in logical order.
 - (d) measuring according to a unit of measurement.
 - (e) pairing items according to common relationships.
- 5.9 develop an understanding of the relationship between cause and effect.
- 5.10 develop concepts related to number, space and time.
- 5.11 develop questioning and problem solving skills.
- 5.12 develop language skills which includes:
- a. using sounds, words and grammatical structures.
 - b. understanding and using language in descriptive, narrative or explanatory forms.
 - c. using language for communication with self and others.
 - d. understanding and using language to express feelings, ideas, needs and observations.
 - e. increasing knowledge of words and their meaning.
 - f. giving and following verbal directions.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Some children have special needs in the intellectual area of development. Programs should:

- 5.13 identify and assess learning problems in young children.

- 5.14 assist young children with learning problems.
- 5.15 identify, assess and assist persistent speech or language difficulties in young children.

6. CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Creative thinking is the ability to use past experience to generate new ideas. It is basic to all creative self-expression and creative problem-solving and is indicated by:

- (a) using imagination and using materials in novel and unusual ways.
- (b) giving more than one answer to a question.
- (c) finding more than one solution to a problem.

Present in all children, including those with special needs, creative thinking is a process of exploration, experimentation, invention and discovery, often resulting in a visible form, or product, that communicates a child's thoughts, ideas or feelings. Separated here for emphasis only, the ability to think and express oneself creatively pervades all areas of development: physical, emotional, self-concept, intellectual and social.

To enhance the creative development of young children, it is important for parents, staff and community services to:

- 6.1 acquire knowledge and understanding of creative development in children.
- 6.2 recognize and appreciate the creativity present in all children.
- 6.3 develop attitudes that encourage the expression of creativity in young children.
- 6.4 recognize and accept individual differences and preferences in creative expression.

- 6.5 plan activities and provide materials that encourage creative thinking and expression in young children.
 - 6.6 use the need for children to think creatively and express themselves creatively as a basis for program planning.
 - 6.7 respect unusual questions and imaginative ideas.
-

To enhance the creative development of young children, programs should provide the opportunity for young children to:

- 6.8 explore the properties of a variety of materials and objects including natural and man-made objects, art material, sound and movement.
- 6.9 try out their ideas within a safe, supportive environment.
- 6.10 express their ideas, perceptions, feelings and thoughts through the use of language, sound, shapes, colors and movement.
- 6.11 develop a flexible, open-ended approach to the solution of problems.
- 6.12 enhance the sensitivity and selectivity of the senses.
- 6.13 express themselves in a spontaneous, uninhibited manner through a variety of media.
- 6.14 produce original or unusual ideas and products.
- 6.15 use imagination and fantasy and pretend to be different people, objects, shapes, colors etc.

- 6.16 develop skill in asking questions.
- 6.17 develop receptivity to new experiences.

7. PARENT INVOLVEMENT

To contribute to the involvement of parents, programs should provide the opportunity for parents to:

- 7.1 identify their needs in terms of the philosophy, goals and program dimensions in this document.
- 7.2 use these needs as a basis for planning and implementing programs that provide opportunities for parents to:
 - a. enhance their knowledge and acquire the skills and attitudes necessary to meet the developmental and special needs of their children.
 - b. be involved in advisory and decision making activities related to policy development, administration, program planning, implementation and evaluation.
 - c. be involved as teacher of their own child in the home.
 - d. be involved as a special resource.
 - e. be involved as an aide in a centre or home program.
 - f. be involved in advocacy roles on behalf of children.
 - g. be involved as support to the program through such activities as fund raising, providing materials or preparing newsletters.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Programs should provide parents of handicapped children with the opportunity to:

- 7.3 receive adequate information about their children's handicap and its implications.

- 7.4 be involved in deciding about placement and programs for their children and transferring program techniques into the home.
- 7.5 increase their coping ability through belonging to particular interest groups and associations.

8. STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

For Early Childhood Services to achieve its stated goals it is important for parents and staff to identify and use community and regional services concerned with young children and their families. From the child and family's perspective it is important that these services be perceived as accessible and coordinated. Therefore, to meet the needs of children and their families, it is important for staff to:

- 8.1 identify their staff development needs in terms of the philosophy, goals and program dimensions in this document. Procedures for determining staff development needs include:
 - a. identifying areas of child development and programming where knowledge and skills may be inadequate;
 - b. acquiring the necessary information on child development;
 - c. acquiring the skills necessary to plan, implement and evaluate a program which recognizes the relatedness of children's developmental needs;
 - d. using appropriate methods for identifying and meeting the special needs of children and their families.
- 8.2 use staff development needs as a basis for in-service programs.
- 8.3 identify community and regional resources which can be used to meet the needs of young children and their families.
- 8.4 use human and physical resources to enhance the content of local programs. For example, a swimming pool or a creative dance program.
- 8.5 consult experts in the community, when appropriate.
- 8.6 plan, implement and evaluate procedures to enhance the coordination of services for young children and their families.

Local programs, community services and government departments should:

- 8.7 identify needs of the community for early childhood services in health, social, educational or recreational areas.
- 8.8 identify gaps in health, social, educational or recreational services for young children and their families.
- 8.9 procure and/or provide services if and when the need is identified by staff, families or communities.
- 8.10 use and support existing community services that meet the special needs of young children and their families.
- 8.11 encourage the independent yet coordinated functioning of services for young children and their families.

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SUMMARY

This document provides basic direction for parents, staff and community services to develop, implement, and evaluate programs that are responsive to the developmental and special needs of young children and their families.

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